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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR JO](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON ISRAEL'S ASSASSINATION OF
HAMAS' RANTISI

Summary

-- Front pages and editorial commentary in papers published today and yesterday were almost entirely dedicated to reports on Israel's assassination of Hamas leader Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi in Gaza. Yesterday's papers highlighted the assassination under banner headlines and graphic photos depicting the assassination as an "Israeli terrorist raid", an "Israeli criminal operation" as well as stating "Israel assassinates Rantisi with an American green light" (Al-Arab Al-Yawm). Reports featured various reactions to the assassination operation, most significantly the Jordanian condemnation as expressed by King Abdullah's exclusive remarks to the Jordan News Agency, describing it as "an ugly crime that personifies the policy of arrogance adopted by Israel" and arguing that this "crime will lead to more violence and will thwart the peace process". Some reports highlighted remarks by an unnamed State Department official urging Israel to consider the consequences of its actions and denying the US prior knowledge of the assassination operation. Many inside pages in all papers were dedicated to various details and photos of the assassination as well as reports highlighting Rantisi's life.

-- Papers published today focus on Dr. Rantisi's funeral in Gaza yesterday and the massive demonstrations that took place in various Palestinian cities to protest the assassination. Papers also highlight the demonstrations that took place in Jordan reporting thousands of participants. Front pages today highlight a report about Prime Minister Al-Fayez cutting short his visit to the United States in view of the situation in the Middle East and reiterating his condemnation of the assassination. A number of inside pages are dedicated to further details and photos related to the assassination and the demonstrations.

Editorial Commentary

-- "Not just a condemnation, but a strong message"

Center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/19) editorializes: "The King's statement that was issued during his current visit to the United States reflects a stand that he wanted to state from the place where the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Sharon receive support from the U.S. administration, and from the place where the King is seeking to draw the attention of this administration and the American public opinion to the fact that one of the reasons for the terrorism that is now threatening all the countries stems of these policies that are in violation of all agreements and international treaties. At the same time, the King wants to underscore the need for an international stand that condemns Israel's measures against the unarmed Palestinian people.. We must point out here to the issue that was highlighted in the government's statement, namely the Israeli plan to export the crisis to countries of the region. The fact that Prime Minister Faisal Al-Fayez cut short his visit to the United States falls within this realm and reflect a decision taken as a result of feeling that viscous plan. Finally, all political and popular forces in our country must realize that they required to be cautious and alert, to learn the lessons of the past, and to express their emotions and their stances in a way that complements the Jordanian stand and supports the brethren Palestinian people, as well as safeguards Jordan's security, which is also being targeted by Israel's begrudging actions."

-- "We the killers!"

Columnist Mohammad Al-Tal writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/19): "The responsibility for what happened to Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi lies first and foremost on us, his people, because we left him and his brethren of Palestine disarmed of all financial and moral support and totally exposed before a murderer who wreaked murder and slaughter. The failing and the weakness of the Arab nation have provided additional support for Sharon in his battle against the Mujahideen. The White House's unprecedented support for the Israeli policy was a determining factor in this open battle, that White House whose master considers every Arab Muslim a target to be eliminated. Rantisi's martyrdom and declaring Khaled Mish'al and other leaders new Zionist targets indicate clearly and explicitly Sharon's disregard for the Arab official regime.. Let Sharon and Bush celebrate their victory. The table will be turned without a doubt. This is the logic of history and the Arab nation will not be pinning its destiny on an official regime that declares its demise every day."

-- "Thank you President!"

Columnist Hussein Rawashdeh writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/19): "Thank you Mr. President. You have set our nation free from the prison of its illusions. You have restored to us our self-worth and you have confirmed the correctness of its choices. No one now can depend on your promises and your initiatives. You have settled the relationship and the dialogue. It is now up to us to depend on our own sweat and blood to face the test of destiny that you had hoped would put us in the graveyard."

-- "No peace and no reform in the Greater Middle East"

Columnist Abu Yazan writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/19): "By assassinating Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi and Sheikh Ahmad Yassin three weeks before, Israel has released a riding wave of anger, has entrenched the increasing power of fundamental and extremist powers in the Palestinian community, and has weakened, to the largest extent possible, the peace camp and those who call for negotiating a solution to the conflict.. When the United States has dropped off the Arab-Israeli conflict and settled for proposing agendas for political reform and democratic change, Israel, in its continuous search to break down the Palestinian resistance and steadfastness, has reminded the region, in its entirety, that this conflict will continue so long as there is an occupation. The situation being as such, the result becomes the fact that the United States, with its absolute and blind bias in favor of Israel, is impeding the solution of the Palestinian issue and is weakening any chance of settling the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that Israel, by continuing its war against and extermination of the Palestinian people and its national and Islamic leaders, is wasting any opportunity for reform and change in the region."

-- "What is Sharon doing?"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (04/19): "Simply, he is making talk about peace with Israel a futile thing.. What the Palestinian people and their leaderships are suffering from today would not have continued without the protection and political and military cover of the United States that has stood by Sharon's state terrorism morally and politically. In fact the U.S. worked diligently to exclude the Security Council and the international community from the struggle and from peace through a series of vetoes as well as the Bush's recent letter of guarantees to Sharon.. Only a miracle can prevent these developments from turning a comprehensive confrontation between American and Israel on one hand and Arab and Muslim people on the other."